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DEBELIUS/MADRID

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# SPAIN'S CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

ANNCR:

SPAIN'S COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AGREES THAT THE COUNTRY IS IN A HURRY FOR CHANGE. HARRY DEBELIUS HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM MADRID.

VOICE:

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS UNDER WAY IN SPAIN, AND THERE MAYBE A CLEAR BLUEPRINT FOR THE CHANGES BY NEXT MAY. SPANISH PREMIER CARLOS ARIAS PROMISED IN A POLICY SPEECH OVER TWO WEEKS AGO THAT SPAIN WILL MOVE TOWAR DEMOCRACY. TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS, PREMIER ARIAS SET UP A MIXED COMMITTEE OVER WHICH HE PRESIDES. IT INCLUDES MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FALANGE -- SPAIN'S NATIONALIST MOVEMENT WHICH WAS THE OFFICIAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FRANCO REGIME.

THE COMMITTEE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME ON WEDNESDAY. AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT PUBLISHED HERE IN MADRID ON THURSDAY SAYS THE COMMITTEE HAS SET UP AN ORDER OF PRIORITIES. MADRID NEWSPAPERS SAY THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TWO-CHAMBER PARLIAMENT WITH ONE CHAMBER ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IS HIGH ON THE LIST OF PRIORITIES. SO IS THE REFORM OF THE LAW OF SUCCESSION.

PREMIER ARIAS WANTS THE LAW OF SUCCESSION CHANGED TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR KING JUAN CARLOS' WIFE, QUEEN SOFIA, TO SUCCEED HIM IF THE KING DIES OR BECOMES INCAPCITATED. THE CURRENT LAW BANS A WOMEN FROM RULING AND REQUIRES MALE HEIRS TO THE THRONE TO BE OVER THIRTY YEARS OLD BEFORE TAKING POWER.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE LASTED FOR ONE HOUR AND A HALF. ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MIXED COMMITTEE TOLD ONE HOUR AND A HALF. ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MIXED COMMITTEE TOLD NEWSMEN HERE THAT IT IS THE COMMITTEE'S DESIRE TO ACT WITH MAXIMUM URGENCY AND TO FINISH ITS JOB WITHIN THREE MONTHS. THE OFFICIAL NOTE SAID THE COMMITTEE'S TASK MUST BE COMPLETED IN A BRIEF PERIOD WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE NATION DEMAND. DECISIONS OF THE MIXED COMMITTEE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION.

JS/LP